

**REMARKS of RONALD N. LANGSTON  
MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

on the

**U.S. Census Bureau's 2002 Survey of Business Owners'  
Preliminary Results**

at the

National Urban League 2005 Annual Convention  
*Washington Convention Center*  
*Thursday, July 28, 2004*  
*Washington, D.C.*

Good Morning.

On behalf of the President of the United States George W. Bush, and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Carlos M. Gutierrez, I bring you warm greetings. Mr. Morial, I want to thank you for allowing the U.S. Census Bureau and the Minority Business Development Agency to participate in this press conference. I also thank the National Urban League for being a strategic partner with the WHITE HOUSE, the Minority Business Development Agency, and a host of other public and private enterprises on the new *Urban Entrepreneur Program*.

It is indeed an honor to represent the Bush Administration and to join with the U.S. Census Bureau in telling the world that minority

and women owned businesses in the United States continue to sustain an accelerated growth rate and play a vital role in our Nation's economic strength and global competitiveness. In fact, the number of black-owned businesses are up 45%; we have 31% more Hispanic businesses; and Asian- and women-owned businesses have increased in number by more than 20%.

### **The BIG Story**

Some of this growth occurred in the shadow of 9-11, the recession, and other economic obstacles. But the spirit of entrepreneurship was never lost—as the new data shows.

These preliminary results, showing that minority groups are increasing business ownership at higher rates than the national average, validates the success of President Bush's pro-growth strategy and his vision of an “*ownership society*.” By fostering an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, through tax credits, lower interest rates, the elimination of capital gains, federal procurement and contracting initiatives and new trade opportunities with Africa and Central America, minorities are taking charge of their destiny and realizing their dreams.

Four years ago this month, the U.S. Census unveiled their 1997 data. The record, then, showed that minority business enterprises had out paced the rate of growth for firms and revenues of all U.S. businesses. But, what I am particularly pleased to see in the 2002 results is, not only has the growth of minority businesses been sustained across the board but, there has been a **dramatic** growth of Black business *firms* and *revenues*, and significant progress made by Hispanic-owned firms since the 1997 survey. Again, what this tells us is that increasingly, more minorities, especially African Americans and Hispanics are seeing themselves as *business owners* capable of providing products and services, competing in the marketplace, and generating wealth for their families and their communities. This change in psyche, in orientation, and the outcome of successful minority business entrepreneurship is not only cause for celebration but it is also paramount to our Nation's future.

## **Implications**

The United States today faces unprecedented demographic shifts that will result in dramatic changes in the size and racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. labor force. The U.S. labor force is predicted to grow much slower (compared to post WWII and Baby

Boom eras), and the growth that is realized will be by minorities and immigrants. As such, the MBDA has deemed minority business enterprises as *the* national priority and is pursuing a goal of **entrepreneurial parity** whereby the number of minority firms, their gross receipts and the number of workers employed by the firm, equals or exceeds their percentage of the total U.S. population.

Consistent with the goal of a strong economy and job creation, the Bush Administration continues to pursue pro-growth policies that help small businesses afford health care, reduce their tax burden and eliminate red tape. MBDA is also pursuing a **Strategic Growth Initiative** to expand small and medium size minority businesses into large enterprises. Establishing strategic alliances and partnerships with historic civil rights organizations, like the National Urban League and others, is critical to achieving entrepreneurial parity.

So, let there be no doubt in anyone's mind . . . "*the success or failure of minority-owned businesses will increasingly drive the success or failure of the overall U.S. economy.*" And, today's news is great news. The current trend and trajectory for minority business enterprise growth is positive and upward. As Alan

Greenspan noted “. . . *the nation’s fortunes, to a very great degree depend on the evolution of growth and productivity . . .*

*productivity growth is an unmitigated good for the large majority of the American people.*” In short, productivity matters. We must

ensure that the growth and productivity of minority business enterprise is not only our focus today, at this press conference, but remains a national priority over the months and years to come.

We appreciate your continued support.

On behalf of the President, I thank you.

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